



The CONSULAR BEACON

A U.S. Embassy newsletter for U.S. citizens in Uruguay

Issue 2 | April 2016

Are you a
SMART
Traveler?

**2016 Tax
Season**

Don't give
'em a biting
chance!

Stay Safe Overseas

Social Security
Updates

MESSAGE FROM THE CONSUL



Welcome to the second edition of The Consular Beacon. As summer in Uruguay winds down, we look forward to cooler weather and taking advantage of the waning tourist season and enjoying what is left of the beautiful summer/fall weather. It also provides an excellent opportunity to review your family's safety plan ahead of the winter season.

With the recent floods in Paysandu and Salto this summer, it is important to know what you and your family will do in an emergency, when you least expect it. In this edition, we have included information on how to stay safe when out in town or at the beach and suggestions for how to prepare your family's emergency kit.

From security information to the latest passport and consular news, we are dedicated to providing you with important information for your stay in Uruguay.

If you recently had a great experience, or have an idea for us to improve our customer service, feel free to drop us a note at MontevideoACS@state.gov. We are always interested in hearing from our customers.

My team and I look forward to meeting you soon. Wherever your travels may take you, know that we are here for you.

TAX SEASON 2016 IS HERE



U.S. citizens or resident aliens living or traveling outside of the United States are generally required to file tax returns and pay estimated taxes in the same way as those residing in the United States. Please note that the U.S. Embassy in Montevideo does not have an IRS office.

Your income, filing status, and age generally determine whether you must file a return. For more information on U.S. tax issues, please consult www.irs.gov. You can find additional information for taxpayers residing overseas at the [IRS's International Taxpayer Site](http://www.irs.gov/international).

If you are a [U.S. citizen](#) or [resident alien](#) residing overseas, or are in the military on duty outside the U.S., you are allowed an automatic 2-month extension to file your return without requesting an extension. For a calendar year return, the automatic 2-month extension is to June 15. Note that you must pay any taxes due by April 15 or interest will be charged starting from April 15.

IMPORTANT DATES

EMBASSY CLOSED

APRIL 18: 33 ORIENTALES

MAY 1: LABOR DAY

MAY 16: BATALLA PIEDRAS

MAY 30: MEMORIAL DAY

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL 15: TOWN HALL



Summer Travel

Get in STEP



Photo: Pablo Castro

Remind your family and friends to enroll in the U.S. State Department's free Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) in order for them to be included on the Emergency Messages mailing list. It is a great way to keep abreast of any public announcements on Travel Warnings, safety and security issues in Uruguay and

elsewhere.

The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program is a free service provided to U.S. citizens who are traveling to or living in a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that U.S. Embassies and Consulates can better assist you in an

emergency, including some situations where family or friends in the U.S. are having problems contacting you with important news.



Smart
Traveler
Enrollment
Program



YOU'RE INVITED!

Come to a Town Hall meeting for all U.S. citizens on **April 15** at the *Espacio Gorlero* in *Punta del Este*. Consular staff will be available to answer questions and address concerns facing the U.S. community in Uruguay. We look forward to seeing you there! **Please RSVP by April 12, 2016 to MontevideoACS@state.gov.**

Espacio Gorlero is located at Gorlero y Calle 30 in Punta del Este.

ARE YOU READY TO VOTE?

Now all U.S. citizens can receive their blank ballots electronically. Depending on the state in which you are eligible to vote, you may get your ballot by email, fax, or internet download. To start, go to www.FVAP.gov to complete a new Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), print and sign the form, then return it to your local election office in the United States. We recommend overseas U.S. citizens get in the habit of completing FPCAs each January.

You should include your email address on the form so it's easier for your election officials to reach you if there is a problem. If you request electronic delivery and include your email address or fax number, you'll receive your blank ballot 45 days before general and mid-term elections and generally 30 days before special, primary, and run-off elections for federal offices.

Elections 2015-2016

**GET STARTED
TODAY!**

**CLICK FOR
MORE INFO**



WHAT'S IN YOUR KIT?



Photo: FEMA/Red Cross

Are you prepared for the unforeseeable? In every part of the world it is a good idea to plan for the kind of emergency that would require you to evacuate at a moment's notice. It is important to have a family disaster supplies kit. This kit is simply a collection of basic items your household may need in the event of an emergency, including copies of important documents (passport, birth certificate, etc.), and some paper currency.

You may need to survive on your own after an emergency. This means having your own [food](#), [water](#) and other [supplies](#) in sufficient quantity to last for at least 72 hours. Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster but they cannot reach everyone immediately. You could get help in hours or it might take days. For more information on emergency planning, visit the www.ready.gov website.



Photo: Pablo Castro

The Uruguayan Ministry of Public Health recommends that bathers use flip-flops or other footwear to go into the water.

The *bagre sapo* (Catfish toad) live both in sand and water. These animals have stinging rays, and their poison can cause pain. Its presence in Uruguay's coast is very unusual.

There has also been a significant number of jellyfish on the coast of Maldonado. These jellyfish are the usual type for the Uruguayan coast, and not the Portuguese Man O' War. However, it is recommended to avoid contact with them.

The main causes of jellyfish swarms are high tides, high temperatures, and changes in water temperature.

Travelers should be advised to maintain vigilance while engaging in recreational water activities. Prevention is the best defense:

- Avoid contact. This may be difficult in conditions of poor visibility, rough water, currents, and confined areas.
- Do not attempt to feed, handle, tease, or annoy marine animals.
- Wear protective clothing, such as protective footwear.

Make an effort to find out which animals may be encountered at the destination and learn about their characteristics and habitats before engaging in recreational water activities.



NO SSA COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENTS IN 2016



With consumer prices down over the past year, monthly Social Security benefits will not automatically increase in 2016.

The Social Security Act provides for an automatic increase in Social Security benefits if there is an increase in inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W). The period of consideration includes the third quarter of the last year a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) was made to the third quarter of the current year. As determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there was no increase in the CPI-W from the

third quarter of 2014 to the third quarter of 2015. Therefore, under existing law, there can be no COLA in 2016.

In 2016, the standard Part B premium amount will be \$121.80 (or higher depending on your income). However, most people who get Social Security benefits will continue to pay the same Part B premium amount as they paid in 2015. This is because there wasn't a cost-of-living increase for 2016 Social Security benefits.

Information about cost of living adjustment can be found at www.socialsecurity.gov/cola

Information about Medicare changes for 2016 can be found [here](#).

A STRONG WARDEN NETWORK

The Warden network consists of U.S. citizen volunteers living long-term in Uruguay, and who are well trusted by their communities. While Wardens are not Embassy employees, they agree to help the U.S. Embassy in a crisis and to disseminate important information to other U.S. citizens, via email, telephone, or other social media. We currently have a great group of Wardens covering Uruguay, but we are looking for additional resources in the Artigas or Salto area. If you or someone you know would like to serve as a Warden for these areas, please contact us at

MontevideoACS@state.gov for more information.



HOW WILL YOU REACT?

In light of the recent terrorist attacks in Paris and out of an abundance of caution, the U.S. Embassy reminds U.S. citizens to review the July 29, 2015 Worldwide Caution for guidance on the continued threat of terrorist attacks, demonstrations, and other violent actions against U.S. citizens and interests overseas.

Have you ever thought about what you would do if confronted with an active shooter attack? The Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) has some great advice to help keep you safe and prepared.

ACTIVE SHOOTER EVENTS

When an Active Shooter is in your vicinity, you must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with the situation.

You have three options:

1 RUN

- Have an escape route and plan in mind.
- Leave your belongings behind.
- Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow.
- Help others escape, if possible.
- Do not attempt to move the wounded.
- Prevent others from entering an area where the active shooter may be.
- Keep your hands visible.
- Call 911 when you are safe.

2 HIDE

- Hide in an area out of the shooter's view.
- Lock door or block entry to your hiding place.
- Silence your cell phone (including vibrate mode) and remain quiet.

FIGHT 3

- Fight as a last resort and only when your life is in imminent danger.
- Attempt to incapacitate the shooter.
- Act with as much physical aggression as possible.
- Improvise weapons or throw items at the active shooter.
- Commit to your actions... your life depends on it.



The first officers to arrive on scene will not stop to help the injured. Expect rescue teams to follow initial officers. These rescue teams will treat and remove the injured.

Once you have reached a safe location, you likely will be held in that area by law enforcement until the situation is under control and all witnesses have been identified and questioned. Do not leave the area until law enforcement authorities have instructed you to do so.

Mosquito Bite Prevention (United States)




Not all mosquitoes are the same. Different mosquitoes spread different viruses and bite at different times of the day.

Type of Mosquito	Viruses spread	Biting habits
 <i>Aedes aegypti</i> , <i>Aedes albopictus</i>	Chikungunya, Dengue, Zika	Primarily daytime, but can also bite at night
 <i>Culex</i> species	West Nile	Evening to morning

Protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites

Use insect repellent

Use an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellent with one of the following active ingredients. When used as directed, EPA-registered insect repellents are proven safe and effective, even for pregnant and breastfeeding women.

Active ingredient		Some brand name examples*
Higher percentages of active ingredient provide longer protection		
DEET		Off!, Cutter, Sawyer, Ultrathon
Picaridin , also known as KBR 3023 , Bayrepel , and icaridin		Cutter Advanced, Skin So Soft Bug Guard Plus, Autan (outside the United States)
Oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE) or para-menthane-diol (PMD)		Repel
IR3535		Skin So Soft Bug Guard Plus Expedition, SkinSmart



* Insect repellent brand names are provided for your information only. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services cannot recommend or endorse any name brand products.



Protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites *(continued)*



- ◆ Always follow the product label instructions.
- ◆ Reapply insect repellent every few hours, depending on which product and strength you choose.
 - » Do not spray repellent on the skin under clothing.
 - » If you are also using sunscreen, apply sunscreen first and insect repellent second.

Natural insect repellents (repellents not registered with EPA)

- ◆ The effectiveness of non-EPA registered insect repellents, including some natural repellents, is not known.
- ◆ To protect yourself against diseases like chikungunya, dengue, and Zika, CDC and EPA recommend using an EPA-registered insect repellent.
- ◆ When used as directed, EPA-registered insect repellents are proven safe and effective.
- ◆ For more information: www2.epa.gov/insect-repellents

If you have a baby or child



- ◆ Always follow instructions when applying insect repellent to children.
- ◆ Do not use insect repellent on babies younger than 2 months of age.
- ◆ Dress your child in clothing that covers arms and legs, or
 - ◆ Cover crib, stroller, and baby carrier with mosquito netting.
- ◆ Do not apply insect repellent onto a child's hands, eyes, mouth, and cut or irritated skin.
 - » Adults: Spray insect repellent onto your hands and then apply to a child's face.
- ◆ Do not use products containing oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE) or para-menthane-diol (PMD) on children under 3 years of age.

Treat clothing and gear



- ◆ Treat items such as boots, pants, socks, and tents with permethrin or purchase permethrin-treated clothing and gear.
 - » Permethrin-treated clothing will protect you after multiple washings. See product information to find out how long the protection will last.
 - » If treating items yourself, follow the product instructions.
 - » Do not use permethrin products directly on skin.

Mosquito-proof your home



- ◆ Use screens on windows and doors. Repair holes in screens to keep mosquitoes outside.
- ◆ Use air conditioning when available.
- ◆ Keep mosquitoes from laying eggs in and near standing water.
 - » Once a week, empty and scrub, turn over, cover, or throw out items that hold water, such as tires, buckets, planters, toys, pools, birdbaths, flowerpots, or trash containers. Check inside and outside your home.

www.cdc.gov/features/StopMosquitoes

uruguay.usembassy.gov

WORLDWIDE CAUTION – MAR 03, 2016



U.S. PASSPORTS & INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE · BUREAU OF CONSULAR AFFAIRS

The Department of State is updating the Worldwide Caution with information on the continuing threat of terrorist actions and violence against U.S. citizens and interests throughout the world. Current information suggests that ISIL, al-Qa'ida, Boko Haram, al-Shabaab, and other terrorist groups continue to plan terrorist attacks in multiple regions. Recent terrorist attacks, whether by those affiliated with terrorist entities, copycats, or individual perpetrators, serve as a reminder that U.S. citizens need to maintain a high level of vigilance and take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness. This replaces the Worldwide Caution dated July 29, 2015.

In August 2014, after the United States and regional partners commenced military action against ISIL, ISIL called on supporters to attack foreigners wherever they are. Authorities believe there is a continued likelihood of reprisal attacks against U.S., Western, and coalition partner interests throughout the world, especially in the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, and Asia.

Extremists may use conventional or non-conventional weapons and target both official and private interests. Examples of such targets include high-profile sporting events, residential areas, business offices, hotels, clubs, restaurants, places of worship, schools, public areas, shopping malls, and other tourist destinations both in the United States and abroad where U.S. citizens gather in large numbers, including during holidays. In the past year, major extremist attacks occurred in

countries including Tunisia, France, Nigeria, Turkey, Egypt, and Mali.

U.S. citizens are reminded of the potential for terrorists to attack public transportation systems and other tourist infrastructure. Extremists have targeted and attempted attacks on subway and rail systems, aviation, and maritime services.

U.S. citizens considering maritime travel also should review information at the websites of the [National Geospatial Agency](#), the [Maritime Administration](#), and [the U.S. Coast Guard](#) for information related to [maritime](#) and port security [globally](#). Current areas of concern include the Caribbean, Gulf of Guinea, Horn of Africa, and the Straits of Malacca and Singapore as a result of maritime crimes including smuggling, human trafficking, and piracy.

For further information:

- See the [Department of State's travel website](#), [travel.state.gov](#), for the [Worldwide Caution](#), Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and [Country Specific Information](#).
- Enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#), [step.state.gov](#), to receive security messages and make it easier to locate you in an emergency.
- Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). We're @TravelGov.